

## **PUBLIC SCOPING NOTICE FOR RESTORATION PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS FOR THE *IGLOO MOON* AND *ALLIE B* CORAL INJURY SITES**

**ACTION:** Notice of development of two Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessments (RP/EAs) for the Allie B and Igloo Moon Coral Injury Sites. To facilitate sound planning and consideration of environmental resources, the NPS intends to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and, for 30 days after the publication of this notice, will accept input from the public on the scope of issues to be addressed in the RP/EAs. In addition, the public will also be invited to provide input on the RP/EAs during a 30-day public comment period after the public meeting anticipated for May 2006.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (Pub. L. 91-109 section 102) and pursuant to the Park System Restoration Protection Act (PSRPA), the National Park Service (NPS) is preparing two Restoration Plans/Environmental Assessments for proposed coral reef restoration actions at the Allie B and Igloo Moon vessel grounding sites, located within Biscayne National Park (BISC).

NPS is undertaking restoration planning and an impact analysis to identify potential impacts of performing restoration activities. As part of this process NPS will evaluate a range of alternatives for site-specific coral reef restoration activities and the potential impacts of each alternative on park resources. Impact topics such as land use, water quality, biological resources, geology, cultural resources, human health and safety, aesthetics, and environmental justice will be considered in this process. The purpose of the RP/EAs is to develop an acceptable restoration plan that can be used by the NPS to restore the Allie B and Igloo Moon sites. This plan is needed to remedy injuries caused by two separate grounding events.

In July 1998, the Allie B tug with loaded barge grounded in BISC. The Allie-B tug came to rest approximately 2,000 feet south-southwest of the location where the towed barge came to rest. The tug grounding injuries were located at 25° 32.255' - N latitude / 080° 06.238' - W longitude (WGS-84 datum), and the barge injuries were located at 25° 32.496' - N latitude / 080° 06.097' - W longitude (WGS-84 datum). Predominant injuries associated with the tug grounding and subsequent extrication included surficial scraping of the hard bottom substrate and significant displacement of unconsolidated substrate during blowhole formations. A keel scar was also documented on the reef crest at the tug grounding site. Predominant injuries associated with the barge grounding included fractured substrate, displacement of substrate and biota, and hull paint deposition on scarred substrate. Surficial substrate scraping and biotal displacement were caused by the tug/barge cable on Ledbury Reef, north of the barge grounding site.

In November 1996, the Igloo Moon, a 462-foot carrier vessel, grounded in BISC. Reported grounding-associated injuries extended over 984 feet along a northeast to southwest grounding track. The seaward-most grounding injury was located at 25°38.088' - N latitude / 080°05.635' - W longitude (WGS-84 datum). The discontinuous grounding track was in a water depth range of 20 to 26 feet. Sixteen injury areas were delineated during damage assessment operations. Predominant injury types within these areas included fractured substrate, leveled topography, displaced substrate and biota, and hull paint deposition on scarred substrate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Damage Recovery Program Manager, National Park Service, Biscayne National Park, 9700 SW 328<sup>th</sup> Street, Homestead, FL 33033, (305)230-1144, BISC\_Superintendent@nps.gov.

**DATE:** Both RP/EAs are expected to be completed and available for review at a public meeting anticipated for May 2006. The date, time, and location of this meeting will be announced through the park's website, local media, and direct mailings to interested parties known to the NPS. The purpose of the public meeting will be to present the documents and to obtain both written and verbal questions and comments on the issues and alternatives to assist NPS in finalizing the RPs/EAs.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Settlements were reached with the responsible parties of each grounding incident. The Stipulation of Settlements required that the defendants pay the United States as compensation for response costs and damages for destruction, loss of, or injuries to park resources pursuant to the Park System Restoration Protection Act (16 USC 19jj).

To facilitate sound planning and consideration of environmental resources, the NPS intends to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and will accept input from the public on the scope of issues to be addressed in the RP/EAs for 30 days after the publication of this notice. In addition, comments will be accepted during a 30-day public comment period beginning on the date of the public meeting anticipated for May 2006.

If you wish to comment on the RP/EAs, you may use any one of several methods. You may mail comments to Damage Recovery Program Manager, National Park Service, Biscayne National Park, 9700 SW 328<sup>th</sup> Street, Homestead, FL 33033. You may also comment on the Internet at the Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Please submit Internet comments as a text file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please put in the subject line "Coral Plan EA" and include your name and return address in your Internet message.

It is the practice of NPS to make all comments, including names and addresses of those who comment, available for public review, after the close of the NEPA process. Anonymous comments may not be considered. NPS will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety. However, individuals not representing businesses or organizations may request that the NPS withhold their name and/or address from the record. NPS will honor this request to the extent allowable by law.

If you would like your name and/or address withheld and are using PEPC to comment, but would still like future mailings/information on the project, you may fill in the name and address field, and mark "keep my contact information private." Or, if you do not want to receive any additional information on the project in the future, you may put N/A in the name and address field.